OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP BULLETIN	NO. 2027-20
	DATE November 6, 2026

TO: NATIONAL APPRENTICESHIP SYSTEM STAKEHOLDERS
OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP STAFF
STATE APPRENTICESHIP AGENCIES
STATE LABOR COMMISSIONERS
REGISTERED APPRENTICESHIP SPONSORS
STATE CTE DIRECTORS
STATE WORKFORCE AGENCY HEADS
OFFICE OF APPRENTICESHIP GRANTS AND CONTRACTS
ALL EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING ADMINISTRATION GRANTEES

FROM: MEGAN BAIRD *Megan Baird*
Acting Administrator, Office of Apprenticeship

SUBJECT: The Department of Labor's Final Rule on *Prohibiting Illegal Discrimination in Registered Apprenticeship Programs*

1. **Purpose.** To inform the staff of the Office of Apprenticeship (OA), State Apprenticeship Agencies (SAAs), Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors and stakeholders of the U.S. Department of Labor's (Department or DOL) November 6, 2026 publication of a final rule, *Prohibiting Illegal Discrimination in Registered Apprenticeship Programs*, which amends 29 CFR part 30 (and also makes minor conforming edits to 29 CFR part 29).

2. **Action Requested.** OA requests that OA and SAA staff and Registered Apprenticeship stakeholders familiarize themselves with the final rule and the information contained in this bulletin concerning the publication of the final rule. Under the final rule's revised nondiscrimination standard, Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors are simply required to comply with all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations prohibiting illegal discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age (40 or older), genetic information, or disability. The revised part 30 will no longer impose any additional equal employment opportunity or affirmative action requirements.

Deadlines for Compliance With the Final Rule's Provisions

- **Sponsors Registered with the DOL Office of Apprenticeship.** Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors registered with the DOL's Office of Apprenticeship must comply with the applicable requirements of the final rule beginning on the rule's effective date, 60 days after publication in the *Federal Register*.

- **Sponsors Registered with a State Apprenticeship Agency.** Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors registered with a SAA must comply with the

applicable requirements of the state's OA-approved plan for nondiscrimination in apprenticeship within 180 days after OA provides written approval of the State plan.

State Plans for Nondiscrimination

- **State Apprenticeship Agencies.** In place of the State Equal Employment Opportunity (EEO) plan that each SAA had been required to submit under previous 29 CFR 30.18, an SAA must now submit to OA a State plan for nondiscrimination in apprenticeship that satisfies the requirements of 29 CFR 30.7. The State plan for nondiscrimination in apprenticeship must be submitted within one year after the effective date of the final rule, unless OA grants the SAA an extension for good cause.

3. Discussion.

Prior Part 30 Requirements

The previous part 30 regulation required Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors to comply with the unnecessary and likely unlawful administrative requirements that included a general duty for all sponsors to engage in affirmative action and meet equal employment opportunity (EEO) obligations. This included a requirement to designate an individual to manage the program's EEO policy, conduct anti-harassment training, and post an equal opportunity pledge, among other burdensome requirements.

The previous part 30 also required sponsors with five or more apprentices to comply with more extensive affirmative action requirements, including conducting utilization analyses and setting utilization goals based upon apprentices' race, sex, and ethnicity. In addition, the previous part 30 regulation required SAAs to submit a State EEO plan conforming to part 30 to receive and maintain recognition.

Revised Part 30 Requirements

The fundamental goal of the final rule is threefold: (1) to simplify sponsors' obligations with respect to nondiscrimination in apprenticeship by affirming the applicability and sufficiency of existing Federal and State laws governing nondiscrimination in the workplace; (2) to rescind the regulatory, nonremedial affirmative action mandate that the Department had imposed upon program sponsors—a mandate that the Department is concerned would not survive legal challenge and that was plainly inconsistent with the policies underlying the statutory, apprenticeship-related, nondiscrimination provisions of Title VII applicable to many of these same sponsors; and (3) to reduce the regulatory and administrative burdens on Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors that could inhibit the accelerated establishment and expansion of Registered Apprenticeship programs by removing all onerous, conflicting, duplicative, or unnecessary requirements found in the previous part 30 regulation.

The final rule replaces the previous part 30 regulation's complicated array of apprenticeship-specific affirmative action and nondiscrimination requirements with a straightforward

requirement that all Registered Apprenticeship program sponsors comply with all applicable Federal and State laws and regulations prohibiting discrimination on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age (40 or older) genetic information, or disability. The final rule also provides clarity to apprenticeship stakeholders regarding the appropriate forums for advancing and remediating issues relating to alleged discrimination in Registered Apprenticeship programs, such as the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission or State fair employment practices agencies. In addition, the final rule requires SAAs to submit a state plan showing that their Registered Apprenticeship specific laws, regulations, policies and procedures conform to this revised Federal standard.

Benefits for Apprentices, Employers, and the Public

- **For apprentices**: The final rule helps ensure that Registered Apprenticeship opportunities are based on individual qualifications, skills, and potential, while preserving protections against illegal discrimination and directing complaints to agencies that can provide meaningful remedies.
- **For employers**: The final rule removes duplicative and likely unlawful requirements and unnecessary paperwork, lowers compliance costs, and makes it easier to create and expand programs, supporting the growth of the National Apprenticeship System.
- **For the economy**: Expanding Registered Apprenticeship can help address skill shortages, strengthen the workforce pipeline, and support growth in both traditional and emerging industries.

4. **Resources.** – Please see the following sites for additional information:
   a. Final rule: Federal Register :: Public Inspection: Prohibiting Illegal Discrimination in Registered Apprenticeship Programs

5. **Inquiries.** If you have any questions, please contact the Office of Apprenticeship at OA.Policy@dol.gov.

6. **Attachments.** Appendix A: Regulatory Text Changes At A Glance

APPENDIX A: REGULATORY TEXT CHANGES AT A GLANCE

Regulatory Area	Prior Part 30 Framework	Final Rule Framework	Operational Effect
Purpose and applicability	29 CFR § 30.1 of the prior version of the part 30 rule established a detailed apprenticeship-specific equal opportunity framework.	Revised § 30.1 establishes a uniform Federal standard prohibiting illegal discrimination and clarifies Registration Agency compliance assistance and enforcement scope.	Sponsors and SAAs use Part 30 as a streamlined nondiscrimination standard rather than a separate EEO operating system.
Definitions	§ 30.2 of the prior version of the part 30 rule contained definitions specific to the prior EEO and affirmative action framework.	Revised § 30.2 relies on definitions in 29 CFR 29.2.	Reduces duplicative definitions and aligns Part 30 terminology with the Part 29 registration framework.
Nondiscrimination standard	§ 30.3 of the prior version of the part 30 rule, included detailed EEO obligations, policy-posting requirements, anti-harassment provisions, and related sponsor duties.	The revised § 30.3 requires sponsors to comply with applicable Federal and State laws prohibiting illegal discrimination based on race, color, religion, national origin, sex, age, genetic information, or disability.	Sponsor need only comply with applicable nondiscrimination laws rather than apprenticeship-specific Part 30 EEO procedures.
Complaints	§ 30.14 of the prior version of the part 30 rule, authorized Registration Agencies to receive, process, investigate, and issue findings on Part 30 complaints.	Revised § 30.4 requires Registration Agencies receiving discrimination complaints to immediately refer complainants to the appropriate enforcement entity.	Complaint investigation and adjudication will be conducted by agencies and courts with the jurisdiction and authority to provide remedies.
Compliance reviews and enforcement	§30.15 of the prior version of the part 30 rule included	Revised § 30.5 ties Part 30 compliance review to Part 29	Registration Agencies monitor compliance through regular program

	separate EEO compliance review procedures and Registration Agency investigation responsibilities.	program reviews and requires the sponsor's self-disclosure when a final nondiscrimination violation determination exists.	oversight and when they receive notice of final determinations issued by appropriate enforcement entities. Sponsors are expected to comply with applicable Federal and State nondiscrimination laws.
State Plans	§30.18 of the prior version of the part 30 rule required SAAs to submit a State EEO plan, conforming to the prior Part 30, to receive and maintain recognition.	Revised § 30.7 requires SAAs to submit a State plan for nondiscrimination in apprenticeship within one year and demonstrate conformity with revised Part 30.	SAAs must review their State's apprenticeship-specific nondiscrimination or equal opportunity laws, regulations, policies, and procedures; and update those laws and policies to conform with the revised Part 30, working with their State legislature as necessary; and develop a State plan that demonstrates their compliance.